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## *Theodore Clement Steele, Honorary Professor of Painting and Greatest Hoosier Artist, Is Buried Among the Hills He Loved*

Among the hills he loved, the rustic country he had made famous, the remains of Theodore Clement Steele were buried Tuesday afternoon at 3 o'clock. Just simple services marked the passing of this man, painter, friend and honorary professor of painting in Indiana University since 1922.

His ashes were buried beneath the oak trees at his home, "The House of the Singing Winds." Evans Woollens, president of the Art Association of Indianapolis, long a friend of the painter and Mrs. Steele, spoke a few words.

The University he had honored by his association with it paused during the hour of the funeral out of respect and as a tribute to a revered member of its faculty. The body was taken to Indianapolis Monday to the Flanner and Buchanan mortuary for cremation, and where a short, private funeral service was read at 4 o'clock.

Mr. Steele's death came as a shock, even to those who knew it was almost too much to hope for his recovery. He had been in failing health last winter while engaged in his art work here in the University, and had observed a diet then in the hope that it would tend to improve his health. In June with Mrs. Steele he went to the Robert Long hospital in Indianapolis to undergo observation for a month.

About three weeks ago he and Mrs. Steele returned to "The House of the Singing Winds" after his trouble had been located and diagnosed. The hope was expressed at that time by Mrs. Steele that his recovery would be rapid and that he would be able to return to his work in the University in the fall. It was reported then that he was better, but visitors calling were not permitted to disturb him.

His condition gradually grew worse in the last week, and Friday it was reported that he was in a

critical condition and that he was dying. The end came at 8:30 o'clock Saturday night and was caused by a stoppage of the gall duct.

Mr. Steele was one of the first of the Indiana artists to come to Brown county and to make his home there. Long before the highway became improved and the community grew into a semblance of modern life, this artist lived in this beautiful country and made famous its beauty by the canvases he painted. He had maintained a home nearly 20 years near Belmont, far back from the main road, and high on a tree-covered hill. It is almost 15 miles from this city.

Since his connection with the University he has painted pictures of the campus and its buildings. When the weather kept him indoors, he could be seen from his window painting the campus that so many have grown to love.

Mr. Steele received the highest honor the University bestows on any individual, the degree Doctors of Laws, at the 1916 Commencement. He was invited to become the honorary professor of painting in 1922, and since that time had maintained a studio in the Library. There he saw and talked with students or anyone who wished to see his pictures.

In June when alumni had returned for the Commencement, some of his works were exhibited in the Men's Gymnasium among the pictures of Brown county artists. The Boatman, which was regarded by many as one of his most famous paintings, and which he had completed while a student in Munich, was among the canvases to be seen there. There were others, and these depicted the campus. Some were painted as recently as last winter and at a time when he was not well.

Mr. Steele was born in Owen

county, Sept. 22, 1847, making him 79 at the time of his death. He is survived by the widow, Mrs. Selma Neubacher Steele, and two sons and a daughter, by a first marriage to Miss Mary A. Lakin. The two sons and the daughter are Brandt Steele and Mrs. Margaret Neubacher, of Indianapolis, and Shirley Steele, of Escalon, Calif.

Many persons have visited the Steele studio in the years it has been in the fastness of Brown county. Excursions were made by students of the University. Only last week a number of students attending the Summer Session went to the studio to see his pictures.

He was held in high esteem by fellow members of the faculty and the student body. At the annual gridiron dinner of Sigma Delta Chi, national professional journalistic fraternity, last winter, a medal was given him as a token of respect and as a tribute to his outstanding

merit. Almost as well known as the artist, was his home, "The House of the Singing Winds." Its artistry, its refinement and its comfortable atmosphere reflect the nature and traits of the painter whose landscapes carried the beauty into museums to whose patrons Indiana is little more than a name.

To "The House of the Singing Winds," went statesmen, writers, business men away from their desks, teachers and others to visit with Mr. Steele and enjoy the panorama of Brown county's hills and winding valleys.

Mr. Steele early exhibited talent as a crayon and pencil sketcher, but his first efforts as a worker in oils was as a portrait painter. Several of his portraits of Indiana governors now hang on statehouse walls. His portrait of James Whitcomb Riley is called a remarkable likeness of the Hoosier poet. Riley was

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## DEATH OF ARTIST IS MOURNED BY THOUSANDS OF FRIENDS

Many tributes have been paid to Theodore C. Steele, honorary professor of painting in the University, by members of the faculty and others who knew the artist. The following are some of the many tributes that have been paid him:

**James W. Fesler**, president of board of trustees—In the death of Mr. Steele, Indiana University has sustained a great loss. No man on the campus was more highly respected and none was paid greater homage by the student body. Mr. Steele reciprocated the sympathy and interest given him by the students. He was happy to have them visit his studio and gladly answered their questions. Although he had accepted his appointment to the faculty with a certain degree of diffidence and reluctance, he quickly adapted himself to the life of the University. He liked to stroll about the campus and greatly enjoyed contact with the students, feeling complimented by the informality of their attitude toward him.

He lived a useful and beautiful life and brought great distinction to his state. Those who were fortunate enough to possess his acquaintance will find it difficult to replace him.

**John W. Cravens**, registrar—The death of Dr. Theodore C. Steele removes from the faculty of Indiana University one of its most beloved members. The esteem in which he was held was shown by the granting of the highest honor the University bestows, the degree, Doctor of Laws, which was given him ten years ago. In the Library annex of the University which will be completed in two weeks is a large section set aside as a studio for Dr. Steele. While most of Dr. Steele's paintings in recent years glorified Brown county scenery, many of his most beautiful ones were made on or near the campus of the University. Above the fireplace in Dr. Steele's Brown county home are the words, "Every morning I take off my hat to the beauty of the world," and this sentiment was his guide and inspiration. His work and associations at Indiana University will always remain as outstanding features in the life of the institution.

**H. A. Smith**, dean of the School of Education—Mr. Steele's death is a lamentable loss to his acquaintances, to the University, to the state and to the nation, but to them all his enviable life has been an inestimable gain. As only rare spirits in all time have succeeded in doing, he has in his most modest and unassuming way perpetuated his influence in the art he patiently and intelligently put upon canvas and is the art that he most successfully embodied in his appealing life and in his lovable personality.

**Prof. W. O. Lynch**, acting head of the history department—It was a great thing for Indiana University just to have Mr. Steele on the campus because of his fine character and fine artistic ability. Nothing that the University has done in recent years has been appreciated more by me than the bringing of Mr. Steele to reside at the University and carry on a part of his work here.

**Dr. Burton D. Myers**, assistant dean of the School of Medicine—I have known the artist, Theodore C. Steele, nearly 15 years. I had visited him in his interesting home and studio in Brown county more than ten years ago and had been charmed by his agreeable personality, the simplicity of his life coupled with an artistic ability that happily came to be more and more widely appreciated as the years passed.

Indiana University showed a fine appreciation of this truly superior man and honored herself in honoring him by conferring upon him the degree, Doctor of Laws, in 1916.

Students and faculty who knew him will not only deeply miss him, but for many years will associate him, his brush, easel and pallet with beauty spots about the campus. We were fortunate in having him with us and will experience a sense of real loss in his absence. He was a real artist and his work lives after him.

**U. H. Smith**, bursar—He was popular as a man among men in the faculty and was a sympathetic companion, adviser and teacher in the student group. One of the best evidences of student recognition of his great value in campus life was the awarding to him by the jour-

alism fraternity at the annual grid-iron banquet held recently "the leather medal." This award is made each year to the man on the faculty who is chosen as having done most during the year toward the general advancement of the high things in culture for which a great educational institution stands.

**Prof. Charles M. Hepburn**—He was not a didactic teacher of art. It was not through lectures in a hall or a classroom that he reached university students. Perhaps he was hardly conscious that his years on the campus of Indiana university, while he was painting, it may be, a picture of a group of trees, he was teaching a group of students something higher than the technique of art. But in a very real sense he opened the eyes of many on the campus to see more clearly and value more highly what is beautiful in nature and in art. And this he did through a rare combination of the skill of the artist and his sympathetic, humane nature.

**Evans Woollen**, President Indianapolis Art Association—Mr. Steele had great skill in painting which he had acquired through long years of unremitting effort. But it was not skill in the application of paint which gave him greatness as a painter. Back of the technique was a mind of power and rare discernment that brought him understanding of what art really is. He discerned the significant and the beautiful and his purpose was to enable those who beheld his pictures to share the joy he had in that discernment. He was a gentle, sensitive spirit who never proclaimed himself and who greatly enriched our life.

**Prof. Robert E. Burke**, head of Department of Fine Arts—With the death of Theodore C. Steele, A.N. A., this nation loses one of its foremost landscape painters, and the state of Indiana its greatest artist. Almost alone since George Inness, Mr. Steele struck the epic notes in landscape: this was his distinction. Before his best canvases one does not think so much of color and design, however fine they may be, as of the emotion conveyed by them. Other artists can

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**THEODORE CLEMENT STEELE**

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a close personal friend of Mr. Steele, the artist having said that many of the Riley poems were "tried out" on him before offered to the public.

He loved the outdoors of his native state and the confines of a studio could hold him no longer. He soon abandoned his studio in Indianapolis and went to live in Brookville. Afterward he built the home in Brown county, near Nashville, which became the focal point for a colony of artists who found nearby innumerable subjects for their brushes.

Drawing was one of young Steele's courses at Waveland Academy, where he received his academic education. While not a prodigy, he showed some talent as a pencil sketcher. Taking up portrait painting he opened a studio in Indianapolis in 1878. But he tired of that, closed his studio and went to Europe. He entered the Royal Academy at Munich in 1885 and studied for five years under Bentzum and Loeffts, two leading landscape authorities. Later he studied in Paris and in 1900 he exhibited some of his works at the Paris exposition.

Returning to the United States he plunged into landscape work and during the next quarter of a century he immortalized in oil the sweep of the Dunes country, the rolling hills of Brown county and the natural beauty of a hundred Indiana countryside settings.

The Hoosier was orthodox in his work, denouncing faddists and fads.

**DEATH OF ARTIST**

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give us good color and pattern, other artists can render the effect before them. Mr. Steele did all this and more. He interpreted for us the very spirit of nature in both her tranquil and her dramatic moods. Mr. Steele could do this only because he himself was in tune with that spirit. In all that he did was reflected his calm philosophy.

William Forsyth, artist—No words of mine can express the tumult and consternation at the news of the death of my old comrade and friend, Mr. Steele. Mine shall be an everlasting regret and sorrow and a loneliness that shall always abide with me.

**Mrs. E. D. Farmer, '01,  
Is Dead; Resolutions  
Made by Committee**

Mrs. Edward Dallas Farmer, of Bloomington, who was a graduate of the class of 1901, died suddenly at the Bloomington city hospital Tuesday of last week where she had gone for an operation for abdominal trouble. Mrs. Farmer was prominent in the activities of the Methodist church, a member of the local council, the Eastern Star, the W.C.T.U., the Conversation Club and the American Association of University Women.

Mrs. Farmer is the mother of Mary Farmer, '24, and Edward, Jr., '28, who was a member of last year's basketball squad.

In addition to the son and daughter, Mrs. Farmer is survived by her husband, E. D. Farmer; J. W. Ritter, her father, and Mrs. F. T. LaRue, a sister. The funeral will be held tomorrow. Miss Farmer came from Colorado for the funeral.

Whereas, By the death of Jessie Ritter Farmer the Class of 1901 of Indiana University suffers the loss of a member whose class spirit equalled her public spirit in all matters that tend toward increasing community friendship and loyalty; and

Whereas, At all class functions her untiring work and unflinching interest added immeasurably to the meeting; and

Whereas, At all future gatherings of the class we shall never fail to deplore her absence; therefore be it

Resolved, That we express in some measure by these resolutions our profound and abiding sorrow at her loss.

(Signed)—Alta Brunt Sembower, W. A. Alexander and Estelle M. Whitted, Committee.

Clarence J. Overbeck, '25, has accepted a position as an instructor in physics in the La Salle-Peru High School and Junior College, La Salle, Ill. Mr. Overbeck has been an assistant in the physics department here the last year.

John W. Cravens, registrar of the University, and Mrs. Cravens will leave Aug. 10 for Minocqua, Wisc., where they will be the guests of Mr. and Mrs. Sanford Teter.